



FINDINGS ABSTRACT/SELECTED IST STUDIES

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PUBLICATIONS SURVEYED

- Kovalski, J. F., Tucker, J. A., & Duffy D.J. (1995). School reform through instructional support: The Pennsylvania initiative (IST). **Communique**, 23 (8), 1-8.
- Kovalski, J. F., Lowery, P.E. & Gickling, E.E. (1995). School reform through instructional support: The Pennsylvania initiative (IST). **Communique**, 23 (11), 14-18.
- Kovalski, J. F., Tucker, J. A., & Stevens, L. (1996). Bridging special education and regular education: The Pennsylvania initiative. **Educational Leadership**, 53 (5), 44-47.
- Kovalski, J. F., Gicklin, E.E., Morrow, H., & Swank, P. R. (1999). High versus low implementation of instructional support teams: A case for maintaining program fidelity. **Remedial and Special Education**, 20, (3), 170-183.
- Papandrea, J. (1999). Schuylers-Chemung. Tioga BOECES Region 7: Share Initiative (year one final report). Unpublished manuscript.

REVIEW OF ARTICLES AND REPORTS ON INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAMS

March 22, 2000

Positive findings

- eighty-five percent of students screened via IST were successful in regular education placements and did not require further evaluation for special education
- IST process led to a decreased number of students found eligible for special education
- IST process led to increased support to those students in need of interventions, but not needing special education referral
- IST process decreased the referrals for special education; one report states these were down by one third to one half of those schools not involved in IST process
- IST process decreased the number of students found eligible for special education (in some cases to only 1% of student population)
- IST process led to a decrease in the number of students retained in a grade which led to instruction matched to student's needs led to a decrease in behavior problems
- middle school student study found significant improvement in GPA
- IST process perceived to be effective pre-referral intervention strategy even for those students who were later referred and found eligible for special education
- instructional assessment procedures better informed IEP development
- instructional assessment procedures provided data on which to make re-evaluation decisions and recommendations
- initial teams tend to rely more heavily on individual interventions as compared to classroom modeling
- IST process leads to high number of direct student interventions and classroom modeling and teacher contacts

Differentiated findings

- the degree of “program implementation” or “program integrity” influenced student outcomes
- high implementation programs achieve significantly higher student results in terms of task completion, task comprehension, and time on task after the program had been implemented more than 45 days (measured at 80 day mark), but for low implementation sustained and in some instances declined over extended time
- **half-hearted efforts are no better for the “at-risk” student than common practice now**
- high implementation teams were characterized by typical collaborative structures, but even more so were influenced by strong principal leadership, extensive-up front and ongoing student data collection to inform instructional decision making, and support teacher involvement.
- the longer a school is involved with IST process, the more likely it is that a teacher will use the process

Logistics

- recommend one IST for every 500 students-elementary and 1/1000 for secondary
- special education regulations and processes at the state and system level need to be integrated with the program to address how requirements will be met
- time for regular educators to participate on the team, collect student data, and to engage in teacher consultation must be negotiated
- commitment and resources must exist for a multi-year project